Independence

HARIJAN

Editor: PYARELAL

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NON-VIOLENT VOLUNTEER CORPS

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

Some time ago an attempt was made, at my instance, to form *shanti dals* but nothing came of it. This lesson, however, was learnt that the membership, in its very nature, of such organizations could not be large. Ordinarily, the efficient running of a large volunteer corps based on force implies the possibility of the use of force in the event of breach of discipline. In such bodies little or no stress is laid on a man's character. Physique is the chief factor. The contrary must obtain in non-violent bodies in which character or soul force must mean everything and physique must take second place. It is difficult to find many such persons. That is why non-violent corps must be small, if they are to be efficient. Such brigades may be scattered all over; there may be one each for a village or a *mohalla*. The members must know one another well. Each corps will select its own head. All the members will have the same status, but where everyone is doing the same work there must be one person under whose discipline all must come, or else the work will suffer. Where there are two or more brigades the leaders must consult among themselves and decide on a common line of action. In that way alone lies success.

If non-violent volunteer corps are formed on the above lines, they can easily stop trouble. These corps will not require all the physical training given in *akhadas*, but a certain part of it will be necessary.

One thing, however, should be common to members of all such organizations and that is implicit faith in God. He is the only companion and doer. Without faith in Him these peace brigades will be lifeless. By whatever name one calls God, one must realize that one can only work through His strength. Such a man will never take another's life. He will allow himself, if need be, to be killed and thereby live through his victory over death.

The mind of the man in whose life the realization of this law has become a living reality will not be bewildered in crisis. He will instinctively know the right way to act.

In spite, however, of what I have said above I would like to give some rules culled from my own experience :

1. A volunteer may not carry any weapons.

2. The members of a corps must be easily recognizable.

3. Every volunteer must carry bandages, scissors, needle and thread, surgical knife etc. for rendering first aid.

4. He should know how to carry and remove the wounded.

5. He should know how to put out fires, how to enter a fire area without getting burnt, how to climb heights for rescue work and descend safely with or without his charge.

6. He should be well acquainted with all the residents of his locality. This is a service in itself.

7. He should recite *Ramanam* ceaselessly in his heart and persuade others who believe to do likewise.

There are many who, whether from mental laziness or from having fallen into a bad habit believe that God is and will help us unasked. Why then is it necessary to recite His name? It is true that if God is, He is irrespective of our belief. But realization of God is infinitely more than mere belief. That can come only by constant practice. This is true of all science. How much more true of the science of all sciences?

Man often repeats the name of God parrot-wise and expects fruit from so doing. The true seeker must have that living faith which will not only dispel the untruth of parrot-wise repetition from within him but also from the hearts of others.

New Delhi, 26-4-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

WEEKLY LETTER

The fever of excitement which the yellow press had been trying to work up for some time past and to which Gandhiji referred last week reached its culmination on Wednesday last when a Hindu boy in New Delhi was stabbed in the back in a dastardly manner by some unknown person. Luckily the assault did not prove fatal. Thanks to the level-headedness shown by the people of the locality, there were no reprisals taken and the trouble did not spread. "It might be presumed at first flush," observed Gandhiji commenting on this, "that because the victim in this case was a Hindu boy the assailant must be a Muslim and *vice versa*. Such speculation, in my opinion, is not only idle but mischievous. We should rather ask ourselves as to how we would have or should have acted, if we were present on the scene." To remain passive witnesses of the dastardly attack would be cowardly. Should they, then, whip out a knife and pay back the miscreant in his own coin? Both these courses would be wrong, observed Gandhiji. The only becoming course, he told them would be to plead with the miscreant not to dye his hand with innocent blood. If in doing so they themselves became victims of the miscreant's anger, they should not mind but should rather welcome it. Such an occasion should provide them with an opportunity to test the sincerity of their daily attendance of the prayer meetings. "When passions rise high and panic and mass hysteria lay hold of the people, it is up to the man of prayer to keep his head above the storm and refuse to sink to the level of the brute. We should pray to God to help us to keep down the hatred and anger in the heart. To be able to conquer anger and hatred and all other baser passions is the fruit of prayer. It is braver far to disarm the miscreant with cool determination devoid of anger than to counter him with a dagger, to prevent an angry word from escaping one's lips than indulge in abuse."

He recalled another instance of assault on a harmless German during the Victory Day disturbances in Delhi that had been brought to his notice the day before. The mass madness at that time was directed against Englishmen and Europeans. In his opinion, it was not less cowardly.

"We should pity the ruffian," he pleaded. "A *Maulana* who saw me just before I started for the prayer was telling me how a number of newspapers were fanning the flames of communal hatred day after day and week after week. They are the real culprits. To incite to murder is as bad if not worse than the murder itself. The actual murderer is very often an ignorant tool, victim of mischievous propaganda." But even such propaganda could take effect only in a vitiated atmosphere. In a healthy atmosphere it would be sterilized. "Panic is the result of fear after all," he concluded. "But a man of prayer knows no fear. Your prayer is vain repetition if it does not clear the atmosphere of fear, panic and mass hysteria."

He reverted to the topic in another after-prayer discourse. Newspapers had reported that Bombay was full of panic, Hindus dared not go into Muslim quarters and *vice versa*, the shops were closed, the streets deserted for fear of riots breaking out. All that had proved to be a press canard. There was neither any panic nor disturbance worth noting in Bombay. Hindu women and children freely visited and went about in Muslim quarters and *vice versa*. The whole story was faked. In Delhi itself a Hindu sister was being driven by a Muslim *tonga* driver only on the day before. The driver had expressed amazement and horror at what was taking place. Why should there be any quarrel between Hindus and Muslims, he had asked and added, "God turns His back on those who quarrel amongst themselves." That showed, remarked Gandhiji, how dangerous it was to give credence to panicky rumours. "The lesson to be learnt from all this is," he proceeded, "that we should not be afraid. Because people will always frighten the timid, not the brave." But it was no use making a show of bravery when there was fear in the heart. Probably they had all heard about a child playing with a snake without coming to harm. But if a grown-up person who was afraid of snakes tried to play with one, it would detect fear in the very touch and probably bite him. But supposing they were afraid and wanted to shed fear, the first condition was that they must not carry any arms. They should put faith in God and depend upon Him to protect them. The man who was afraid and carried arms repudiated God and made the arms his God.

THE BAR SINISTER

Only a wall divides Gandhiji's residence from the Municipal sweepers' quarters in New Delhi. Yet a gulf as wide as that between Abraham and Lazarus separates the living conditions in the two. Gandhiji took opportunity early in the morning on Saturday last to visit it. A small square enclosed by rows of single room tenements on all sides constituted the *busti*. The tenements were miniature Black Holes with only one narrow aperture near the roof for air and light. One felt suffocated. Some of these tenements, only 10×12 ft., were occupied by as many as six, eight and even ten members of a family. How they could possibly live there with decency God alone knew. Right in the middle of the square was a double row of ramshackle latrines open in front and bathing taps. Most of the people were sleeping in the open. Their bed clothes were indescribably filthy. How could it be otherwise with the

amenities provided to them? Speaking at a volunteers' gathering the next day, Gandhiji poured out the lava that filled his soul. It was their shame as it was his. The volunteers had been in attendance in his camp. He felt grateful for the love and diligence with which they had served him and his party. But what was the use of their serving him if they served not the lowest among the low who were his next door neighbours. They should rather go and serve the *bhangis* who lived next door to him in filth and squalor. Such service carried with it its own reward. He had come to live in the Sweepers' Colony but could not live in the filth in which they lived. The fault was not theirs but of those who had reduced them to that state. The quarters provided for them were worse than the worst prison cell that he had seen in India or in South Africa. If they went to *Bhangi* quarters, not as their patrons or teachers but as their true servants, they would be able to reach their hearts and transform the look of things in no time.

A similar visit to the Sweepers' Quarters in old Delhi near Ajmeri Gate revealed conditions still more shocking. There were only eight tenements cowering under the city wall with only a narrow strip of space separating them from the edge of the city's main sewer. It hardly afforded passage to one man. We were told that one sweeper child had actually tumbled into the sewer and been drowned some time back. Some more tenements were being improvised by the sweepers themselves with mud and old rusty corrugated iron sheets as their only material. There was only one water tap for bathing and filling drinking water pots, and that had only been recently installed. The whole place was indescribably filthy. One had to hold one's breath; it stank. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur who had accompanied Gandhiji to the *busti* could not stand it; she vomited.

This city, the pride of the *Pandavas* and the Great Moghuls, Gandhiji learnt, was today perhaps the filthiest city in India. The municipal insanitation had reached the very limit. One could believe it after what one saw reflected in the sweepers' quarters. Seven years ago the late Shri Mahadev Desai visited these quarters and made a harrowing report. The passage of time only seems to have made things worse. Gandhiji was shocked. What were the municipal councillors and their health officer doing, one wondered. How one wishes that the rate payers would wake up and make their city fathers realize their duty.

Like a refreshing bath in the Holy Ganges in contrast with this was the second visit to Malaviyaji on the eve of Gandhiji's departure for Simla. But of that more next week.

New Delhi, 1-5-'46 PYARELAL

FOR WOMEN

City women often ask what they can do in the way of social service. The tragedy of the lives of these sisters is that they are not in touch with those whom it is their duty to serve. If they were, the question would not arise.

I wonder how many, if any, of the well-to-do sisters of Delhi have ever visited the Harijan quarters here. The *busti* on the outskirts of which Gandhiji lives cries out for service for these neglected members of society. Their living quarters are bad enough, though better than many in other cities or perhaps even some in Delhi itself. Women should be in the forefront of agitation for the providing of better quarters for these people without whose service we could not live. Their wages are insufficient. It is piteous to see their bed clothes or their personal wear and the unwashed condition of the children. Is it too much to ask a band of sisters to visit these quarters daily, bathe the children, comb the matted hair of the girls, give them simple remedies for any ailments, have their clothes washed, provide milk for the children and train the women how to feed themselves and their families and how to keep their environment as clean as possible in spite of the dark, dingy and insanitary living space that is their lot today? It is devoutly to be hoped that the elected representatives of the various provincial governments will look upon making decent quarters for Harijans and indeed all labourers and raising their wages as the very first charge on their revenues.

The builders of New Delhi obviously paid scant attention to any air and light outside the gilded palaces of the rich. Our own governments must be quick to mend their errors.

New Delhi, 26-4-'46 A. K.

CRUEL

The following is the gist of a letter to the Railway authorities by some passengers:

> "We the passengers in the "Hubli Mail" which has arrived in Poona at 10.19 p. m. beg to bring to your notice that the carriage in which we are sitting should hold only 28 whereas actually there are 80 persons in it plus heavy luggage. We are at a loss to understand why there is no supervision of accommodation available in trains. Our condition is comparable to the legendary 'Black Hole of Calcutta'. We are being suffocated. Women and children are almost dying. Is this fair treatment to third class passengers?"

The complaint is most apt. The description is an everyday occurrence. But will the railways, who live on the income derived from third class passengers, do anything for these poor people? Third class compartments and third class travel need thorough and immediate overhaul and reform. It is high time we had a government that thought in terms of the people.

New Delhi, 27-4-'46 A. K.

HARIJAN

May 5 1946

INDEPENDENCE

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Friends have repeatedly challenged me to define independence. At the risk of repetition, I must say that independence of my dream means *Ramarajya*, i. e. the Kingdom of God on Earth. I do not know what it will be like in Heaven. I have no desire to know the distant scene. If the present is attractive enough, the future cannot be very unlike.

In concrete terms, then, the independence should be political, economic and moral.

'Political' necessarily means the removal of the control of the British army in every shape and form.

'Economic' means entire freedom from British capitalists and capital, as also their Indian counterpart. In other words, the humblest must feel equal to the tallest. This can take place only by capital or capitalists sharing their skill and capital with the lowliest and the least.

'Moral' means freedom from armed defence forces. My conception of *Ramarajya* excludes replacement of the British army by a national army of occupation. A country that is governed by even its national army can never be morally free and, therefore, its so-called weakest member can never rise to his full moral height.

Though Mr. Churchill is claimed to have won the war for the British, he has in his Aberdeen speech uttered words of wisdom from the standpoint of a radical non-violent reformer. He knows, if any panoplied warrior knows, what havoc the two wars of our generation have wrought. In another column I reproduce the summary of his speech as reported in the public press. Only I must warn the public against the pessimistic note underlying the speech. Nothing will be found to have gone wrong if mankind recoils from the horrors of war. The bloodletting that men have undergone to the point of whiteness will not have been in vain, if it has taught us that we must freely give our own blood in the place of taking other peoples' blood, be the cause ever so noble or ignoble.

If the Cabinet Mission 'delivers the goods', India will have to decide whether attempting to become a military power she would be content to become, at least for some years, a fifth-rate power in the world without a message in answer to the pessimism described above, or whether she will by further refining and continuing her non-violent policy prove herself worthy of being the first nation in the world using her hard-won freedom for the delivery of the earth from the burden which is crushing her in spite of the so-called victory.

New Delhi, 29-4-'46

PRESS SUMMARY OF MR. CHURCHILL'S SPEECH

The world is very ill. This is the time when hatred is rife in the world and when many mighty branches of the human family, victors or vanquished, innocent or guilty, are plunged in bewilderment, distress or ruin. Two fearful wars in our lifetime have torn the heart out of its grace and culture.

Measureless injury has been done to much that the 19th century would have called 'Christian civilization', for all the leading nations have been racked by stresses which have blunted their sensibilities and have destroyed their agreeable modes of social intercourse.

Only science has rolled forward, whipped by the fierce winds of mortal war, and science has placed in the hands of men agencies of destruction far beyond any development of their commonsense or virtue.

In a world where over-production of food was formerly from time to time a problem, famine has laid its gaunt fingers upon the peoples of many lands and scarcity upon all.

The psychic energies of mankind have been exhausted by the tribulations through which they have passed and are still passing. It is not only bloodletting that has weakened and whitened us.

The vital springs of human inspiration are, for the moment, drained. There must be a period of recovery. Mankind cannot, in its present plight, bear new shocks and quarrels without taking to altogether cruder and primordial forms.

Yet we do not know that the hatreds and confusion which are found will not confront us with even harder trial than those we have so narrowly and painfully survived.

In many countries, where even united efforts would fall short of what is needed, party strife and faction is fomented or machine-made and skeleton fanatics rave at each other about their rival ideologies.

All the while, the ordinary folk of every country show themselves kindly and brave and serviceable to their fellow men. Yet, they are driven against one another by forces and organizations and doctrines as wantonly and remorselessly as they ever were in the ages of absolute emperors and kings.

There never was a time when breathing space was more needed, a blessed convalescence, a truce of God and man.

(*Statesman*, 29-4-'46)

GOSHALAS AND PINJRAPOLES

(By M. K. Gandhi)

The following condensation from a scheme propounded by Sardar Sir Datar Singh will be of general interest:

It is estimated that there are at present 3000 'goshalas' in the country with a population of over six lakhs head of cattle. These organizations, besides taking up the improvement of their institutions as envisaged by the Government of India, in the present threatened famine conditions can come to the country's help by production of more milk in the institutions. The number of well-organized 'goshalas' and 'pinjrapoles' can be taken as half, i. e. 1500. The cattle may be classified as:

1. Good Dairy type 20%	1,20,000
2. Fair type—good for breeding, though not highly productive 20%	1,20,000
3. Old, infirm and unfit for further breeding 60%	3,60,000

It is the first and second class that could be exploited for milk production and breeding. Out of these 2,40,000, half will be milch and half dry.

Better feeding, management, organization, etc. would mean an increase in production of 1,20,000 seers or say 3,000 maunds of milk per day.

In order to achieve this end immediately, a skeleton plan is suggested below:

1. Productive animals should be separated from those that are aged, infirm or otherwise useless. The latter should be removed to rural areas, preferably to forest *rakhs* in order to relieve congestion and allow better feeding of productive cows. These cattle should not be allowed to propagate. Their care, as well as that of dry stock farms, may be in the hands of a committee.

2. For the achievement of this end, the stock should be divided in the following manner:

a. Milch animals about to calve should be kept at the 'goshala' premises.

b. Dry animals fit for breeding should be kept on the lands, if any, belonging to the 'goshala' in the neighbourhood or may be provided for at a place from where they could be returned when about to calve, and the animals, which go dry in the 'goshala,' should be sent there.

3. The congestion-relieved 'goshalas' and 'pinjrapoles' will have enough space to house cattle properly, feed them scientifically and carry out other improvements.

4. To further help, encourage and stimulate these institutions in this direction, it is suggested to help them financially by giving them 50% reduction on concentrates and fodder on the condition that these institutions will increase their milk production immediately either by keeping milch cattle of the owners who are not able to keep them during the famine days or by buying cattle where their finances permit. The Government will have the option of purchasing one-third of their milk supply for the needy people of the locality and in the neighbourhood, if required.

5. Attempts should be made to feed cattle more on feeds which are not generally required for direct human consumption such as oil-cakes, cotton seeds, etc.

6. It may also be stated here that by feeding by-products of grains to the cattle, not only can the production of available food be increased in the form of additional milk from these animals as compared to the food value of these by-products of food in case they are directly consumed, but it will also be a more economical method of using the latter. Within limits, it will have double effect. It will help in the production of human food and will also protect the cattle from being underfed during the scarcity period.

7. All possible facilities should be provided for transport and supply of concentrates and other cattle-feeds to these institutions. Collection of data as to the requirements of the 'goshalas' and the available stocks in these organizations should immediately be taken in hand. Provision should be made well in advance for the supply of these essential requirements from surplus to deficit zones. All this must be done in advance through Goshala Development Officers, who will be responsible for the working of the whole scheme.

The Sardar suggests to every province the appointment of Goshala Development Officers, training of workers and the supply of bulls. He rightly says that for real success there must be genuine co-operation between Government and the public. He has no doubt that 'goshalas,' humanitarian and Cattle Welfare and such other bodies will give the co-operation if approached.

Another friend of cattle writes as follows:

"I want you to consider one or two suggestions for saving our cattle during the coming famine as the shortage of fodder is likely to be acute in some of the famine-stricken areas. The world is familiar with 'Save the Children' campaigns. Why should we not in India inaugurate a 'Save the Cattle' campaign? Many of our good cattle were slaughtered as you know, during the war and we cannot afford to lose more through starvation.

"My concrete suggestion is that well-to-do people with plots of land on which grass is grown should be generous enough to permit cattle belonging to less fortunate people to graze in their compounds. This may not afford large scale relief, since it would apply in the main to urban areas. Nevertheless, it is a point worthy of consideration.

"Provincial govenments should establish a chain of 'goshalas' where owners of cattle, who are unable to maintain them during the period of famine, may leave them to be fed and maintained at State expense until the crisis is over. Whether this should be done entirely free or if a fee should be levied from the owners and recovered later is a detail which the provincial governments may decide for themselves. It would be easier for provincial governments to make arrangements for the collective feeding of large numbers of cattle than the distribution of fodder to individual owners."

New Delhi, 20-4-'46

IDEAL FOR WOMEN

Many social reformers have espoused the cause of women. But with almost all of them woman was the queen of the home. Her sphere of activity was limited to looking after her husband's comfort and proper bringing up of children. With the advent of Western education sex equality became the vogue, but the equality was superficial and even artificial. Gandhiji believes in real equality. He practises what he preaches. In his Ashram the common kitchen has often been entrusted to men. It is simply an indication that most occupations are common to men and women. Woman is man's equal and can even be his superior. Care of children and the home is a joint responsibility. Woman is the mother. But her motherly tenderness should extend beyond her own children and therefore her sphere must also extend beyond the home.

During Gandhiji's Bengal tour, while answering questions in one of the workers' meetings, he said that a woman who really and truly prepared her children for the service of the motherland need not do anything more. A friend interpreted this remark as a confirmation of the popular belief that woman's one duty was to look after the home and bring up the children properly. Gandhiji laughed and said: "People always interpret things in the way that suits them. Men and women given to animal enjoyment can never prepare their children for the service of the motherland. It is only those whose law of life is self-control that can do so and such will always find time for service outside the domestic sphere."

He holds strong views against birth control with the help of contraceptives. "Contraceptives," he says, "are an insult to womanhood. The difference between a prostitute and a woman using contraceptives is only this that the former sells her body to several men, the latter sells it to one man. Man has no right to touch his wife so long as she does not wish to have a child, and the woman should have the will power to resist even her own husband."

Addressing a women's meeting during his recent visit to Madras he said that he wanted women to radiate the *tejas* of purity, even that of Sita before which the mighty Ravana had to accept defeat. If they possessed her purity, they would rule India and bring the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. He would like to see women not only managing the Kasturba Trust but taking a large share in all national activity. He would see the wheel in the hands of millions of India's women and would have them banish from their hearts all traces of untouchability and communal differences and speaking Hindustani.

Woman is personification of non-violence. While talking to some Jain *Sadhvis* at the time of his talks with Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah he once said: "Woman is naturally more self-suffering. Non-violence therefore comes more easily to her. You are Jain women. I expect a lot from you."

He often says: "I am half woman." According to him, man comes nearer to woman when he assimilates and practises non-violence which requires greater courage than violence, because for violence physical strength and brute force is all that matters. Thus to be nearer a woman is a mark of a higher state.

Speaking at Borivli Kasturba Training Camp he said: "I wish to see women as men's equals and even their superiors. I would like you to occupy all posts of responsibility. But that does not mean that I would like you to occupy them without possessing the capacity. In fact I want you to give proof of greater ability than men.

"Equality must not mean copying men's shortcomings. Smoking and drinking, for instance, are common amongst men. You are not to descend to their level. You are to set to them an example in purity, renunciation, selfless love and service."

New Delhi, 15-4-'46 S. N.

IGNORANT LEGISLATION

Shri T. N. Jagdisan writes to Gandhiji:

"The following appeared in the *Hindu*: 'April 1, Karachi. The Sind Assembly today referred to a select committee the Bill seeking to empower the Government to sterilize lepers. In the statement of the Objects and Reasons of the Bill, it is stated that leprosy is not indigenous to the province of Sind, but the facilities for medical treatment available here attract an increasingly large number of leper immigrants from all over India and this has created a serious problem for the province. This Bill provides for sterilization of male lepers.'

"About a year ago Dr. R. G. Cochrane (now on leave in England) had expressed himself strongly against the proposal in an opinion which he was asked to give. If leprosy were hereditary, sterilization of male cases of leprosy would be a measure calculated to control leprosy. But leprosy is *not* hereditary. It is spread by the close and prolonged contact of healthy persons, especially children, with infective cases. Any child brought into contact with an infective case may develop leprosy. Children born to an infective parent or parents do not develop the disease if they are removed from the infective persons at a very early age. Reports of intensive surveys, done so far, show that in our Indian joint-families less infection results by contact with parents than by contact with uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, etc. There is also infection by neighbours and co-tenants. So the sterilizing of male cases of leprosy would not improve the situation. On the other hand it will definitely worsen it by frightening the patients and driving them to conceal their disease for long years. And let it be remembered that leprosy can be concealed for long years, and these years are just the years when the patient, if treated, can get better; if untreated, can be an effective source of infection.

"If the proposed legislation is enacted, it will in practice operate only on the obvious, advanced, mutilated case who is probably not very infective, even if he were of the infective type, who certainly has no scope for marriage and progeny. The Sind Bill seeks to control the spread of the disease by immigrant patients. The immigrant patient, if infective,

will not by sterilization cease to be a source of infection, in close and prolonged contact. The only way in which leprosy can be controlled is by the ensuring of conditions in which infective cases of leprosy, whether immigrant or indigenous, do not live in close and prolonged contact with children.

"The Sind Bill is both unintelligent and harsh. Leprosy, like tuberculosis, runs in families by the close contact of healthy members, particularly the children, with the infective ones. Measures to control leprosy need be no harsher than measures to control tuberculosis, and should be directed at cutting the channel of communication between the infective and the uninfected. The pity is that even the most enlightened people have old and wrong notions about leprosy, and, as of all things an ancient prejudice dies hardest, a penalizing attitude enters into the minds of legislators and administrators when they deal with leprosy. But with one voice all the experience of great workers in leprosy cries aloud that harsh measures intended to abolish leprosy have only had the opposite effect of driving the disease underground, thereby increasing it. In leprosy as in other spheres of life, harshness never pays, violence never pays."

The medical world will support every word of what Prof. Jagdisan has said. This is what Manson-Bahr, an authority on tropical diseases, says with regard to heredity in leprosy:

"From the fact that it tends to run in families and that in certain instances it assumes the appearance of atavism, leprosy was formerly believed to be hereditary. If this were so, how explain the striking fact, brought out by Hansen, that of the numerous offspring of 160 Norwegian lepers who emigrated to America not one has become a leper? Although acid-fast bacilli have been found in the placentas, the evidence of Culion settlement in the Philippines is that leprosy is not hereditary."

The only way to prevent the spread of the disease is to segregate the lepers. A child born of leprous parents should be separated from them immediately at birth. According to still another authority on tropical diseases if this is delayed for six months, the child will have probably contracted the disease by that time. Ignorant legislation can serve no useful purpose whatsoever. On the contrary, it is likely to do a lot of harm as the good professor has explained in his letter. It is hoped that medical opinion all over the country will protest against the proposed measure and the Government will take really proper and effective measures for preventing the spread of the disease instead of passing the proposed bill.

New Delhi, 23-4-'46 S. N.

By M. K. Gandhi

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SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND FOOD SHORTAGE

Ever since the P. S. V.'s visit to Gandhiji at Sevagram in connection with food shortage, his mind has been working to find out ways and means of combating the coming disaster. He has laid the fullest emphasis on "Grow More Food" and "Save As Much Food As Possible" campaigns. In his *Ashram* all the flower plants have been dug out and vegetables grown there instead. Nobody is to eat a morsel more than necessary, and no food is to be wasted. Over and above these, he has been thinking whether any food substitutes can be found. He asked me one day whether tender shoots of wheat before the grain has formed inside had any nutritive value. The idea is to tide over the period till the next crop is ready. So far as I know tender shoots or ears of wheat before the proper formation of grain has no nutritive value whatsoever. It is for the research institutions in the country to work on the problem and help to ward off the famine. Some of the medical journals have published reports of scientists having succeeded in making grass edible and assimilable by human beings. The Nutrition Research Laboratories at Coonoor can play a great part in this connection. It is sincerely hoped that the authorities of that institution will suspend for the time being academic research and concentrate on finding out ways and means of fighting the food shortage, for instance, finding out alternative foods, working out the role of tubers and root crops—admittedly short term heavy yielding crops, ideally suited to tide over the food crisis. They can also help a good deal by making suggestions for efficient husbanding of the available food resources in the country. A friend who had good experience of agriculture and kisans was telling us the other day that practically 1/8th of the wheat stored by kisans goes to waste because of improper storage. That should be remedied without delay, and it is for medical research workers to suggest simple and efficient methods to do so. They can work out austerity meals, suggest menus giving a balanced diet and at the same time economize as much food as possible. The Nutrition Research Laboratories, Coonoor, have rendered useful service in the past by making the intelligentsia of the country food conscious. It is for them now to help the masses. Then and then alone can the heavy annual budget of such research work be justified. The money spent on the research comes from the pockets of the poor and the research workers must see that they do not die of preventable starvation.

S. N.

[The more I study the food crisis the more convinced I feel that people are being starved not for want of food, but for want of the co-operative effort of the expert and a national Government at the Centre bent upon meeting the crisis and inspiring the masses with confidence.

New Delhi, 20-4-'46 M. K. G.]

A LIGHT IN DARKNESS

Seven miles from New Delhi, on the main road to Muttra, near Okhla Station, is an as yet tiny institution, the Kasturba Balika Ashram, that lights the shadow of the Imperial City with its steady, mild glow. Under that shadow cowers the Harijan population of the city amidst the filth and squalor of *bastis*, where men and women engaged in rendering the most useful service to society are condemned to live under sub-human conditions of existence, to the shame and despair of all humanitarians. In the midst of his multifarious engagements Gandhiji found time to pay the Ashram a visit on Saturday, the 20th April.

The institution owes its existence to the passion for Harijan uplift of Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru who four years ago donated a sum of Rs. 10,000/- for founding an industrial home for the training of Harijan girls. Shrimati Sumitra Devi (Mrs. Madhavaprasad Birla) just before her untimely and tragic death willed a sum of one and a quarter lakh of rupees for the institution. The present roomy buildings in which it is housed is the gift of a Delhi gentleman to whom it originally belonged. One and a half year after the death of Mrs. Kasturba Gandhi, its opening ceremony was performed by Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru, when a beginning was made with 12 Harijan girls. At present the number of girls receiving training is 40, 14 out of these being from C. P., 10 from U. P., 8 from Rajputana, 5 from the Punjab, 1 from Maharashtra and 2 from Gujarat. Three out of 40 are Caste Hindus, all the rest being Harijans. All the expenses of the Harijan girls are paid by the Harijan Sevak Sangh. Admission is confined to unmarried girls, of 7 to 12 years of age, who have read up to the second class. But owing to the difficulty of securing Harijan girls even with that minimum standard of qualification, some altogether illiterate girls too had to be admitted. Teaching is now being given up to the 6th class. Training includes house-keeping, crotchet work, cooking, kitchen gardening, spinning and the allied processes and *batik* work. In literary training the curriculum in force in the District Board schools has been followed hitherto. But it has now been decided to prepare the candidates for the Prayag Mahila Vidyapith examinations.

Vocational training is given the place of honour in the syllabus of studies. By devoting one hour daily to spinning, 790 hanks of yarn representing a spinning wage of Rs. 90/- were spun since Gandhiji's birthday in October last. The highest number of hanks spun by a girl was 86, the second best having spun 82 hanks of 20c. out of self-carded cotton, representing a spinning wage of Rs. 13–7–0 and Rs. 12–15–0 respectively. Both the girls distinguished themselves in their literary studies too. The Balikashram experiment has conclusively proved that by giving one hour to spinning a student of school or college can produce all the cloth for her requirements.

Over and above this, 643 pieces of clothing were stitched, and 40 pieces of embroidery and six toys were produced by students in the vocational classes, the total amount of labour represented by these being Rs. 158/-. The total income for the last six months was Rs. 56,261-1-3, expenditure during the corresponding period being Rs. 45,067-2-9

The institution is being conducted under the personal guidance of Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru, who visits and stays in the institution for a week or a fortnight every two or three months, and Thakkar Bapa, who claims with Gandhiji the title of being Harijan No. 1 of India. The institution has been fortunate in securing the services of Shri Prabhudas Gandhi, who is the Superintendent and of Shrimati Anasuya Mehta who is the Head Mistress.

A small exhibition of the products of the vocational activity of the students had been arranged. The exhibits included specimens of embroidery, crotchet and *batik* work, and maps and drawings by the students showing a high degree of artistic taste and manual skill. Their singing of *bhajans* was beautiful and the pronunciation of the Sanskrit verses that were recited as good as that of any 'Caste Hindu' girl, if not better. What pleased Gandhiji particularly was the high standard of personal cleanliness and tidiness shown by the girls. A few days back they had all come to *Bhangi Nivas*, a distance of seven miles, to meet Gandhiji and had walked back.

Making the cultural aspect of education the theme of his talk Gandhiji said, addressing them in Hindustani:

> "I attach far more importance to the cultural aspect of education than to the literary. Culture is the foundation, the primary thing which the girls ought to get from here. It should show in the smallest detail of your conduct and personal behaviour, how you sit, how you walk, how you dress, etc., so that anybody might be able to see at a glance that you are the products of this institution. Inner culture must be reflected in your speech, the way in which you treat visitors and guests, and behave towards one another and your teachers and elders.
>
> "I was pleased too that you walked all the distance to and from *Bhangi Nivas*, when you came to see me. But if you came only to please me, your trudging had no merit. It will do you no good. You must make it a rule to prefer walking to using a conveyance. Motor car is not for the millions. You will therefore shun it. Millions cannot afford even train journey. Their world is their village. It is a very small thing but if you faithfully adhere to this rule it will transform your entire life and fill it with a sweetness that natural simplicity carries with it.
>
> "Education here won't qualify you for luxurious living. I want the Harijan girls here to show such a degree of culture that everybody should feel ashamed to regard them as untouchables. That is the goal of the Harijan Sevak Sangh's activities. This institution should demonstrate to the whole world the heights to which Harijans can rise, if they are freed from the incubus of untouchability and conversely the sacrilege and inhumanity of the institution of untouchability itself. I look forward to the day when this institution will fill the whole country with its fragrance and become a centre of attraction for girls from near and far."

New Delhi,
22-4-'46

PYARELAL

SWARAJ THROUGH SPINNING

(By M. K. Gandhi)

An A. I. S. A. worker writes thus :

"If we are to teach the spinners to spin with understanding and wear nothing but Khadi, it is only natural that the commercial side of Khadi will suffer. I personally am all in favour of the new scheme enunciated by you. You have said that we must make the spinners self-sufficient and that to obtain Swaraj through their activity is the aim of the A. I. S. A. You also want them to learn all the processes from cleaning cotton up to making slivers. 'This way lies Swaraj', you say. I admit it is right for spinners to learn well all the processes. This knowledge will increase their wage-earning capacity as also make them self-sufficient. The quality of yarn and cloth will also improve. But how can we win our freedom this way? How are we to bring home this lesson to the spinners? Please write clearly on this issue so that not only may the workers understand your meaning, but they may also be in a position to explain it to the spinners."

Imagine, if all the spinners understood the inner meaning of the wheel and span willingly and not under pressure, what an India there would be! The awakening of crores of women spinners would *ipso facto* produce lakhs of Khadi weavers. Imagine too the numbers of men and women workers needed to bring about this awakening! If such a time comes, textile mills even if any were working, would have to rely on foreign countries for the sale of their produce. They would not, as they do today, hold imperialistic sway over the villages and cities. There would be Hindu-Muslim unity, all would be truthful, there would be no need to tell anyone to wear Khadi for no cloth other than home-spun would be available. That Swaraj is hidden in this revolutionary change should be self-evident to seeing eyes. The question may imply that such a consummation is impossible. If such is the question, it means that Swaraj through non-violent means is impossible.

Another question asked is how the spinners are to be given the requisite education. To seek out the right answer is the main work of the A.I.S.A. Enough research has not so far been done. It is the duty of every A.I.S.A. worker to try to solve the puzzle. Now that we have Congress ministries in several provinces the work should be easy. Let the workers throw themselves heart aud soul into it. They will never succeed if they look all the time to the Central Office for help and guidance.

New Delhi, 26-4-'46
(From *Harijansevak*)

MARCH OF CIVILIZATION

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Q. On page 91 of 'Harijan' dated 14-4-'46, it has been argued that the bullock is a living machine and that contact with such harmless animals is a potent factor in the onward march of human civilization. The animals are, however, made 'harmless' by making them 'impotent'. Is this the correct method of the onward march of civilization? If we have cows, we must have bulls. The bullock is a creation of human selfishness and cruelty. If not in thinking man, in the lower animals at any rate, all the force of their nature rages in the fury of the generative desire. Therefore, to turn the noble animal, the '*Vahana* of *Mahadev*' into a beast of burden is sad.

A. The writer is logical. But such logic would prevent the domestication of the cow. For there is probably more cruelty in domesticating the cow than in castrating the bull. It is a question of degree. Further march of civilization seems to imply increasing domination of man over beast, together with a growingly humane method of using them.

There are three schools of humanitarians. One believes in replacing animal power by the use of any other. Another believes in treating animals as fellow beings and making such use of them as a brotherly spirit will permit. The third will not make use of lower animals for man's selfish purpose but will employ instead one's own power and that of fellow beings to the extent that the latter give intelligent and willing use. I belong to the third school. It is possible by human labour, judiciously and humanely employed, to do fruit culture to a large extent and even corn culture. Indeed, as prisoners we civil resisters in Transvaal dug up stony ground for converting it into a municipal garden. No ploughing would have answered the purpose. The ground could yield only to the pickaxe.

The first I hold to be useless and even injurious in the end to mankind. A judicious combination of the other two seems to me to be the goal. I can see no escape from castration. The only thing to be done is to make it progressively humane.

A correspondent has brought forward in this connection the question of branding animals. Does the pain caused by branding compensate for the benefit it confers upon the owner and the animal? If it confers none on the animal, naturally branding must be taboo.

New Delhi, 29-4-'46

By M. K. Gandhi

Economics of Khadi
Price Rs. 4-0-0, Postage 13 Annas

Cent Per Cent Swadeshi
Price Rs. 2, Postage 5 Annas

Constructive Programme
Its Meaning and Place
Price Rs. 0-6-0, Postage 2 Annas

KANU GANDHI'S CAMP

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

This issue contains an abridged account of Kanu Gandhi's second camp. How the candidates were selected, how there was no financial loss, how beginning with cleaning latrines they carried out all the other work, what they ate etc. are all matters worthy of attention. The smallest detail was not neglected. The running of this camp will serve as a guide to others who wish to organize or attend training camps.

The secret of Kanu Gandhi's camp lay, in my opinion, in the fact that the organizers knew their job and were there as workers rather than for issuing orders. Where the organizers are mere superintendents the work is often apt to be lifeless or slack.

It is sad that the camp had to be of short duration. There were strong reasons for this being so. Let us hope that those who came for training will utilize in their own lives the lessons they learnt and thus make progress towards becoming perfect servants of the people.

[An abstract from Kanu Gandhi's description of his *shibir* in Sevagram to which reference has been made in the foregoing shows that candidates were informed that the *shibir* would be conducted during the hot months and in Gandhiji's absence. Nevertheless 160 applications came in. Forms were sent to them all but as Gandhiji's movements became uncertain and Shri Kanu Gandhi was with him, the filled-in forms were received at Bardoli where Gandhiji was originally to have gone, from thence to Poona, and thence to Sevagram. Ultimately there were 22 men and 4 women admitted to the *shibir*.

These men and women had to attend to everything, beginning with conservancy work and going on to cooking and cleaning. They had to do strenuous farming work too. At first it was intended to have sheds on the open ground near the Ashram. But as only 26 persons were able to come they were accommodated near the Talimi Sangh quarters and so far as it was possible the Talimi Sangh people also collaborated with the *shibir* trainees. On two days in the week they had sprouted gram, otherwise *dallia* was served for breakfast. For the midday meal and supper they had *jawari* bread or rice and *dal* with vegetables. Oil was served instead of ghee and an attempt was made to give 8 ounces of curds per head during the 24 hours. All this cost -/6/9 per day.

Every trainee knew how to spin but they had regular training given them in the new process of sliver-making called *tunai*. It was possible to attain a speed of 170 rounds of yarn per hour, *tunai* being included in the period.

They had lessons in first aid, civil drill, singing picked national songs and they were taught the way to hoist the national flag with ease and without any mishap.

All had to take part in the prayer meetings.

A special feature of the training consisted in seeing whether they would take to Hindustani written in both Nagri and Urdu characters. Shri Devprakash of the Talimi Sangh successfully taught Urdu for three hours during the three weeks, thus dispelling the gloomy foreboding that the Urdu characters cannot be learnt without much labour and difficulty. The result shows just the opposite. In spite of the rigorous work and heat and very simple food, only four persons lost in weight from 2 to 5 lbs. All others showed decisive gain.]

New Delhi, 29-4-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

A REQUEST

Change of address to be effective for the week should please be intimated to us by *Tuesday*. Please quote the subscriber number with the intimation.

Please note that change of address *cannot be effected twice within one month.*

Subscribers are not enrolled for a period of less than six months.

TO AGENTS

I am glad to announce that the quota of paper sanctioned for the Harijan weeklies has been increased by Government. Hence, orders for more copies of all the three weeklies can now be entertained. Those agents who want to increase their number of copies can write to the office now. I may remind them that consequent increase in the sum of their deposits will have to be remitted to the office along with the orders.

Please refer to the 1st of the Agency terms. It has been found on experience that its working gives rise to many complications and much unnecessary correspondence. It is therefore amended as under :

1. The agent will have to deposit with us a sum sufficient to cover the cost of *at least two months' copies* required by him. Out of this amount a sum equivalent to one month's cost will be treated as *reserved* or *fixed* deposit. Every week the bill will be deducted from the other half, i.e. the *current* deposit, and on the sum of that amount being insufficient to cover the next week's copies, the supply of copies will be stopped *at once.*

Agents are requested to make the necessary arrangement according to the amended term immediately, as the new arrangement comes into force from the 1st of May. All agencies which do not make this arrangement before the next issue is out, will be treated as cancelled.

2-5-'46

J. DESAI

CULTURAL CONQUEST AND ROMAN SCRIPT

Shri S. A. Ayer of the Azad Hind Government came to discuss with Gandhiji the other day the question of issuing a news bulletin in Roman script for the I. N. A., as proposed by the Central I. N. A. Relief Committee. "The Committee are not enamoured of the Roman script," he observed. "They have accepted it only as a temporary expedient. Otherwise we shall have to print it in three different scripts — Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, and that would mean a lot of expenditure. Moreover it would only be a continuation of the old tradition," he added. "The men had got used to the Roman script while they were in the Indian Army and so retained it when they were operating in S. E. Asia." "You forget," replied Gandhiji "that you are not working in S. E. Asia today, but in India. May I ask if these men ever write to their wives and children in the Roman script?"

"Never," replied Shri Ayer. "They write one and all in Hindi, Urdu, Tamil or any of the other Indian scripts."

"This means," remarked Gandhiji, "that they all know one or the other Indian script. I could understand your wanting to adopt Roman script as a temporary makeshift if we had no script of our own. But to adopt Roman script for Hindustani which has got two acknowledged scripts is only a sign ot the psychological conquest that the English have made over us. In order to conquer the English who had conquered you, you adopted the English garb, i. e. Roman script for your bulletins in S. E. Asia. You should have discarded this symbol of the cultural conquest and insisted on having your bulletin in two Indian scripts rather than in Roman. The latter was primarily adopted for the sake of the British officers and men who had to learn Hindustani in order to rule over us. They solved the difficulty presented by the permutations and combinations of the Urdu alphabet and tempted us by their typewriters, telegraph and printing machines which use Roman script. We succumbed. We may not hark back to the symbol of our cultural conquest when we are out to end India's age-long slavery *in toto*. When you served in the British army it was with the prospect of getting rewards in the form of decorations, comfortable pay and pensions, grants of land etc. But now you don't want such temptations. You serve only for the independence and honour of your country. You do not want the easy way.

"India will soon have independence. Do not think that there will be one script for Hindustani all at once. It will come when you and I have honestly and diligently learnt both the scripts — not before. That is the least price we have to pay for independence."

In support of his argument he cited the parallel of South Africa where they have everything in two languages. The Government gazette is published in two languages and so are the text books for use in schools. "And it is not called partition, but Union of South Africa. To maintain this union they have four capitals one for each province. That is the way of a free and freedom-loving people."

Shri Ayer agreed and said, "We shall have the Hindustani bulletin in Nagri and Urdu scripts, not in Roman."

New Delhi, 20-4-'46 PYARELAL

THE MONKEY NUISANCE

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

People get weary of the trouble caused to them by monkeys. In their hearts they wish them dead. They are inwardly pleased if anyone kills them. At the same time they will oppose their slaughter. A friend who is well acquainted with the scriptures writes that monkeys ruin the crops, they even kidnap children and remove articles, eat and spoil fruit etc. Their number is daily increasing. I am asked as to what non-violence dictates in the matter.

My *ahimsa* is my own. I am not able to accept in its entirety the doctrine of non-killing of animals. I have no feeling in me to save the life of these animals who devour or cause hurt to man. I consider it wrong to help in the increase of their progeny. Therefore, I will not feed ants, monkeys or dogs. I will never sacrifice a man's life in order to save theirs.

Thinking along these lines I have come to the conclusion that to do away with monkeys where they have become a menace to the well-being of man is pardonable. Such killing becomes a duty. The question may arise as to why this rule should not also apply to human beings. It cannot because, however bad, they are as we are. Unlike the animal, God has given man the faculty of reason.

New Delhi, 25-4-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

GANDHIJI'S PRESS STATEMENT

Gandhiji has issued the following statement to the Press:

Mr. Hoover's flying visit to India has excited considerable interest and possibly hope. Whilst all the help that America and other countries can send to India, struggling against starvation, must be welcome, my endeavour has been to find ways and means to make ourselves self-supporting. The moment people give way to panic, starvation is a certainty in spite of a continuous line of steamers offloading grain from outside on India's wharves. Conversely, every grain from abroad sent as a matter of duty to self-reliant India, honestly and manfully braving the threatening danger, will be twice blessed. Let Mr. Hoover's visit serve as a reminder to Government servants, monied men and grain merchants that they must think all the time of their duty to the masses. Nature never fails those who will help themselves.

New Delhi, 26-4-'46

QUESTION BOX

(By M. K. Gandhi)

CRIMINALS AND NON-VIOLENCE

Q. What would be the treatment meted out to criminals in Free India in the light of your non-violence ?

A. In Independent India of the non-violent type, there will be crime but no criminals. They will not be punished. Crime is a disease like any other malady and is a product of the prevalent social system. Therefore, all crime including murder will be treated as a disease. Whether such an India will ever come into being is another question.

New Delhi, 28-4-'46

WHITED SEPULCHRES ?

(By M. K. Gandhi)

"I am a woman but feel I must write to you about this matter. About three months ago a man who said he was . . .'s servant came here. I have always had a high opinion of the integrity of Congressmen and was therefore glad to meet him. I used to spin every day and he used to come to see me daily and call me daughter. I too began calling him uncle. One evening he brought a car and asked me if I had ever been in one and if not, would I not go with him for an outing ? It never entered my head to suspect him and I acceded to his request. I was first taken to . . . where I was gagged and later we proceeded to a house in . . . For some days every effort was made to commit an outrage on me. I tried several times to escape but was always stopped with the threat of being shot. Who does not love life and I confess I was frightened. Then one day a wealthy merchant and Congress leader of . . . came and asked me to go and enjoy life with him in . . . My abductor was looking at me and laughing. I cannot describe in words the horrible behaviour of this scoundrel. There are others also implicated whose names I do not know, but the wealthy merchant gave Rs. 500/- to the old woman in charge of the house where I was kept. She tried to persuade me to go with him and told me that I would be kept in comfort.

"Later one day I was rescued by a friend of my father's with the help of the police."

I have received more than one such letter accusing some Congressmen of immorality. It would not be wisdom to believe that they are all untrue and ignore the complaint. It has never been claimed that every Congressman is a model of virtue. But it is a matter of pride that the public expect a high standard of morality from Congressmen. All kinds of immorality are prevalent among us. It is a reformer's duty to try to wean from error those who are justly accused of misbehaviour. There are limits to immorality, if any can be claimed to pass muster. If what has been related is true, every man has to ask himself how far he is justified in seeking to satisfy his lust at the expense of innocent girls.

New Delhi, 26-4-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

CASTE CORROSION

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Soil corrosion eats up good soil. It is bad enough. Caste corrosion is worse, it eats up men and divides men from men. Letters continue to come from Christians, Parsis, naturally from Scheduled Castes and women. They require representation in the ministry. Provincial competition is already there. The makers of ministries are not free from the taint and even when they do not favour it, they will lose caste if they dare to do the right thing and restrict their choice to merit only. Democracy can only represent the average, if not less than the average. Therefore, a democratic institution to be pure has to attend to the all-round education of the humblest and the lowliest. It must take in its sweep all superstition and social abuse. In such a society there will be no Christian and non-Christian, there will be no distinction of sex. If best persons are women all ministers will belong to that sex, if Parsis they will be all Parsis. That good day may be far off. What is to be done in the meanwhile? Those who feel that they are left out should have patience and rise by dint of service and merit. Those who happen to be ministers should mete out even justice which must include extra effort to raise the neglected and downtrodden. They should make all feel at every step that they are servants, not masters of the nation.

New Delhi, 29-4-'46

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